



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/596,991	07/04/2006	Angel Palacios		4195
7590 01/04/2012				
Angel Palacios Mendez Alvaro 77, portal 4, piso 4B Madrid, 28045 SPAIN			EXAMINER EGLOFF, PETER RICHARD	
			ART UNIT 3715	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 01/04/2012	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

**Office Action Summary****Application No.**

10/596,991

**Applicant(s)**

PALACIOS, ANGEL

**Examiner**

PETER EGGLEFF

**Art Unit**

3715

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 July 2010.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on \_\_\_\_; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.
- 4) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 10, 14, 17, 18, 20, 23, 32, 36, 39, 40 and 48-58 is/are pending in the application.
- 5a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 10, 14, 17, 18, 20, 23, 32, 36, 39, 40 and 48-58 is/are rejected.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 9) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 10) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 01 July 2010 has been entered. Claims 1, 10, 14, 17, 18, 20, 23, 32, 36, 39, 40 and 48-58 remain pending.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

4. Claims 1, 10, 18, 23, 32, 40, 48- 51 and 53 and 56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cox (US Patent No. 5,336,093) in view of Mejia (US Patent No. 7,011,525 B2).

Regarding claims 1 and 23, Cox discloses a system for facilitating language learning wherein said system is used upon samples of a target language, wherein each of said samples is called in this invention original extract, said target language can be a foreign language or it can be the native language of the learner, wherein said system comprises:

a) means to show one or more blind extract for at least one of said original extracts (dots), wherein a blind extract is a graphical entity whose fragments have certain correspondence with fragments of an original extract, said original extract being associated to said blind extract (column 3, lines 31-34), a blind extract might contain one or more fragments, the fragments of a blind extract are created by replacing the letters of said fragments of said original extract by graphical objects that are different from the letters of said target language (see Fig. 1),

b) means to choose at least a fragment of a blind extract wherein said fragment is associated to a fragment of an original extract (select a dot – column 3, lines 64-67),

c) means to generate information about said fragment of an original extract which is associated to said fragment of a blind extract (column 3, lines 47-48), and wherein said system can be used in isolation or as a complement to other language orientated systems, for facilitating foreign language learning or for correcting a problem in the utilization of the native language, wherein at least two of the linguistic entities which are included in said sample of target language and which have the same pronunciation as each other are represented by graphical objects which display the same information, wherein a linguistic entity is an entity of any of the following

plurality of types: sentences, phrases, words, syllables, or phonemes (dots representing syllables are all identical - see Fig. 1) (as per claim 1),

a method for facilitating language learning, said method being executed upon one or more computerized or non computerized electronic systems, wherein said method is used upon samples of a target language, wherein each of said samples is called in this invention original extract, said target language can be a foreign language or it can be the native language of the learner, wherein said method comprises the steps of:

a) inspecting one or more blind extracts (dots) for at least one of said original extracts, wherein a blind extract is a graphical entity whose fragments have certain correspondence with fragments of an original extract, said original extract being associated to said blind extract (column 3, lines 31-34 - see Fig. 1), a blind extract might contain one or more fragments, the fragments of a blind extract are created by replacing the letters of said fragments of said original extract by graphical objects that are different from the letters of said target language (see Fig. 1)

b) choosing at least a fragment of a blind extract of said blind extracts wherein said fragment is associated to a fragment of an original extract of said original extracts (column 3, lines 64-67),

c) generating information about said fragment of an original extract which is associated to said fragment of a blind extract (column 3, lines 47-48), and wherein said system can be used in isolation or as a complement to other language orientated systems, for facilitating foreign language learning or for correcting a problem in the utilization of the native language, wherein at least two of the linguistic entities which are included in said sample of target language and which have the same pronunciation as each other are represented by graphical objects which display the

same information, wherein a linguistic entity is an entity of any of the following plurality of types: sentences, phrases, words, syllables, or phonemes (dots representing syllables are all identical - see Fig. 1) (as per claim 23).

It is noted that Cox does not explicitly disclose: for one or more of said blind extracts which are shown, the text that is associated to said language sample is not shown, so that there is no interference between text and sound (as per claims 1 and 23). However, Mejia discloses a similar system for displaying blind extracts to student learning a language, wherein during the presentation of a blind extract, the original extract is not shown to the student (column 4, line 59 - column 5, line 32; see Fig's 5, 6a, 6b and 6i). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Cox by not showing the original extract while showing the blind extract, as taught by Mejia, with the motivation of making the student learn the sounds of a word or passage without relying on the text of the passage.

Regarding claims 18, 40, 48, 50, 51, 53, 55 and 56, Cox further discloses means to show the phrase structure of at least one of said blind extracts in some form, such as for example another type of form (Cox specifically discloses spaces in between syllables to emphasize the phrasing - see Fig. 1) (as per claims 18 and 40), said information about said fragment of an original extract is a playback of said fragment of original extract (column 3, lines 47-48) (as per claims 48 and 53), at least a blind extract which is a syllabic blind extract, whose distinguishing feature is that it is divided into parts which are differentiated visually and which correspond to the syllables of said original extract (column 3, lines 31-34) (as per claims 50 and 55), and at least a blind extract whose distinguishing feature is that it is divided into parts which are

differentiated visually and which correspond to the words of said original extract (see Fig. 1) (as per claims 51 and 56).

Regarding claims 10 and 32, at least a blind extract that is a segmental blind extract, whose distinguishing feature is that it is divided into parts which are visually differentiated (dots) and which correspond to the segments of the words of said original extract, (vowels - column 2, lines 61-68). It is noted that Cox may not explicitly disclose said segments are units of sound of lower level than syllables. However, the segments of the original extract in Mejia's invention are lower level than syllable level, as required (see Fig. 6a: three segments make up a single syllable "height"). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Cox by segmenting the original extract below the syllable level, as taught by Mejia, with the motivation of teaching the student how to sounds out words on a phoneme level.

Regarding claims 49 and 54, Cox does not explicitly disclose the words of at least one original extract are biunivocally associated to the fragments of the blind extract to which said original extract is associated, i.e. for each and every word in said original extract there exists one and only one fragment in said blind extract, and there is no fragment of said blind extract which is not associated to a word in said original extract or to some punctuation sign in said original extract (as per claims 49 and 54). However, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to try associating each word of the passage with only one blind extract. A conclusion that a claimed feature would have been obvious to try must show the following: a finding that at the time of the invention, there had been a recognized problem or need in the art, a finding that there had been a finite number of identified, predictable potential

solutions, a finding that one of ordinary skill in the art could have pursued the known potential solutions with a reasonable expectation of success, and any secondary considerations. In this case, there was a recognized need to teach language and reading skills to students by helping the students separate and distinguish the various portions of a sentence. One of ordinary skill in the art presented with the teachings of Cox would have found a finite number of identified, predictable solutions for separating a sentence into its component parts, such as phrases, words, syllables, and phonemes. Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would have found it obvious to try associating each fragment of the blind extract with each word of the original extract, instead of with each syllable, as Cox teaches, with a reasonable expectation of success in teaching the student word by word, instead of syllable by syllable.

5. Claims 14, 17, 20, 36, 39, 52, 57 and 58 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cox (US Patent No. 5,336,093) in view of Mejia (US Patent No. 7,011,525 B2), and further in view of Siegel (US Patent No. 5,799,267).

Regarding claims 14, 17, 36, 39 and 52, the combination of Cox and Mejia does not explicitly disclose means to graphically emphasize certain parts of at least one blind extract among said blind extracts, using for example a special font format or some other graphical means (as per claims 14 and 36), wherein said graphical emphasizing is performed simultaneously to the aural reproduction of a fragment of the extract, so that the parts that are reproduced at a given moment are approximately the same parts that are graphically emphasized at the same moment (as per claims 17 and 39), and wherein said means can be applied to graphically emphasize at least a fragment of said blind extract, said fragment being associated to a fragment of an original



extract, said fragment of an original extract being linguistically relevant, wherein the candidate linguistically relevant fragments are segments, or syllables, or words or phrases (as per claim 52). However, Siegel discloses a similar language learning method that includes means for emphasizing parts of a passage by highlighting, and performing this emphasizing simultaneously with the aural reproduction of the passage, where a linguistically relevant word may be further emphasized by presenting a pictorial depiction of the word (column 11, lines 1-25). Since Cox discloses presenting a blind extract of an original extract, and Siegel discloses the process of highlighting a sequence of word in an extract while simultaneously presenting the fragments of the extract aurally, and further presenting pictorial representations of relevant fragments, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to modify the combination of Cox and Mejia by including means to graphically emphasize parts of the blind extract along with the aural reproduction of certain fragments, wherein the fragments are linguistically relevant fragments, with the motivation of helping the user to learn to pronounce the fragments by following along visually while hearing the correct pronunciation.

Regarding claim 20, the combination of Cox and Mejia discloses allowing the user to select fragments of the extract and perform aurally reproductions of one or more fragments of said original extract, wherein a fragment can be the a segment, a syllable, a word, a group of words or the whole original extract itself (column 4, lines 17-20). Cox does not explicitly disclose a monitor, such as a computer monitor or a television means to show blind extracts on said monitor control logic that allows a user to interact with at least one of said blind extracts, and which allows the user to select fragments of the blind extract on the monitor to be played (as per claim 20). Instead, Cox discloses the fragments are displayed on a page, and the fragments

are played aurally using an audio tape. However, Siegel discloses that such display of extracts on a computer monitor, and allowing the user to select extracts to be presented aurally using the computer, is well known in the art of language learning (column 4, lines 2-11; column 11, lines 1-25). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Cox by implementing the displaying and selecting using a computer and monitor, with the motivation of being able to provide a much larger collection of extracts for presentation to the user.

Regarding claims 57 and 58, Cox discloses a system for performing the following steps:

a) managing samples of a target language, wherein each of said samples is called in this invention original extract, wherein said target language can be a foreign language or it can be the native language of the learner (see Fig. 1),

b) showing one or more blind extracts (dots) for at least one of said original extracts, wherein a blind extract is a graphical entity whose fragments have certain correspondence with fragments of an original extract said original extract being associated to said blind extract, a blind extract might contain one or more fragments, the fragments of a blind extract are created by replacing the letters of said fragments of said original extract by graphical objects that are different from the letters of said target language (column 3, lines 31-34),

c) choosing at least a fragment of a blind extract of said blind extracts wherein said fragment is associated to a fragment of an original extract of said original extracts (column 3, lines 54-67),

d) generating information about said fragment of an original extract which is associated to said fragment of a blind extract (column 3, lines 47-48), and wherein said system can be used in isolation or as a complement to other language orientated systems, for facilitating foreign language learning or for correcting a problem in the utilization of the native language, wherein at least two of the linguistic entities which are included in said sample of target language and which have the same pronunciation as each other are represented by graphical objects which display the same information, wherein a linguistic entity is an entity of any of the following plurality of types: sentences, phrases, words, syllables, or phonemes (dots representing syllables are all identical - see Fig. 1) (as per claims 57 and 58)

It is noted that Cox does not explicitly disclose; for one or more of said blind extracts which are shown, the text that is associated to said language sample is not shown, so that there is no interference between text and sound. However, Mejia discloses a similar system for displaying blind extracts to student learning a language, wherein during the presentation of a blind extract, the original extract is not shown to the student (column 4, line 59 - column 5, line 32; see Fig's 5, 6a, 6b and 6i). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Cox by not showing the original extract while showing the blind extract, as taught by Mejia, with the motivation of making the student learn the sounds of a word or passage without relying on the text of the passage.

It is further noted that the combination of Cox and Mejia does not explicitly disclose the system is a computer readable medium containing computer executable instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer, allows said one of more processors to perform the steps (as per claim 57), or a computer readable medium containing a data set that,

when interpreted by one or more processors of a computer, allows said one of more processors to perform the steps (as per claim 58). However, Siegel teaches the use of a computer readable medium containing instructions (or a data set) that can be executed by a processor to perform similar language teaching functions (column 4, lines 1-11). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Cox by using a computer-readable medium executable by a processor, as taught by Siegel, to implement Cox's method, as such a modification would involve applying a known technique to a known device to yield predictable results.

### ***Response to Arguments***

6. Applicant's arguments filed 01 July 2010 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant contends that independent claims 1 and 23 are allowable over the combination of Cox and Mejia, and independent claims 57 and 58 allowable over the combination of Cox, Mejia and Siegel, because the Mejia reference does not disclose the newly added feature of "wherein at least two of the linguistic entities which are included in said sample of target language and which have the same pronunciation as each other are represented by graphical objects which display the same information, wherein a linguistic entity is an entity of any of the following plurality of types: sentences, phrases, words, syllables, or phonemes." However, it is noted that the Cox references explicitly discloses this feature (Cox discloses that the graphical objects are all the same, which means that for two linguistic entities having the same pronunciation are represented by the same graphical objects). Furthermore, Applicant's arguments do not address the combination of references relied upon in the current rejection. One

cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986). .

The objection to independent claims 1, 23, 57 and 58, and the section § 101 rejection of claims 23, 32, 36, 39, 40, 54, 55 and 56 have been withdrawn in view of the amendments to claims 1, 23, 57 and 58.

### ***Conclusion***

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Peter Egloff whose telephone number is (571) 270-3548. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:30am - 5:00 pm EDT.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Xuan Thai can be reached at (571) 272-7147. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Peter Egloff

/XUAN M. THAI/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3715